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Call Citizens First to Recover from Hurricane Irma

TALLAHASSEE, FL – Citizens Property Insurance Corporation is urging its policyholders to protect themselves from [assignment of benefit](#) scams and abuse by calling Citizens first to report losses following Hurricane Irma.

Citizens representatives are available 24/7 to handle claims calls at 1.866.411.2742. Catastrophe Response Centers are now established in Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties. More information can be found in the [Claims section](#) of the [Citizens website](#).

“Citizens is ready to assist our policyholders as they recover from Hurricane Irma,” said Barry Gilway, Citizens President, CEO and Executive Director. “Our claims representatives are ready to help. All you have to do is call.”

Unfortunately, unscrupulous contractors and repair companies thrive in the frenzied days following any storm. Policyholders must be wary of unlicensed contractors or deals that sound too good to be true. There have also been reports in some areas of policyholders being approached by people falsely claiming to represent Citizens.

To protect themselves, policyholders who have experienced a loss from the storm should [Call Citizens First](#) to ensure they stay in control of their claim. Further, Citizens advises policyholders not to sign anything, including an assignment of benefits, before consulting with Citizens or their insurance agent.

Here’s why. You may be signing away your rights and be left with unfinished repairs or forced to pay a contractor for repairs not covered by your policy. The policy may also place a limit on emergency repairs until Citizens is notified to inspect damage before permanent repairs are made.

Policyholders are most likely to be offered an assignment of benefit (AOB) while making emergency repairs or when companies come to the door soliciting business. Policyholders may

Christopher B. Gardner, Chairman, Orange County • Gary Aubuchon, Lee County
Bette Brown, Monroe County • Blake Capps, Martin County • James Holton, Pinellas County
John McKay, Manatee County • Freddie Schinz, Okaloosa County
Barry Gilway, President/CEO and Executive Director

be told repairs cannot be completed until they have signed an AOB contract, which allows the company to submit the claim and deal directly with Citizens.

More information on the [potential pitfalls of assignments of benefits](#) is available on Citizens website. More information also can be found on [Citizens website](#).

To report suspected insurance fraud, Citizens policyholders can call Citizens Special Investigations Unit toll free at 1.855.748.9596 or submit a report [online](#). Customers also can contact the Department of Financial Services, Division of Consumer Services Insurance Consumer Helpline immediately at 1-877-693-5236. Your concerns will be promptly referred to insurance fraud investigators.

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In 2002, the Florida Legislature created Citizens Property Insurance Corporation (Citizens), a not-for-profit alternative insurer, whose public purpose is to provide insurance to, and serve the needs of, property owners who cannot find coverage in the private insurance market.

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